
Goodbye

I missed my new friends very much. But luckily, the provisions of various online and electronic communication channels keep people living in different corners of the world connected. Every moment with them was so treasurable. I will never forget those beautiful moments.

Home Sweet Home

I became more independent after my return. My problem solving skill has improved and I became more confident to face any challenges.

Sharing

Treasure your opportunities. If you never try, you will never know.

Overall Rating

5 out of 5



Exchange in Iowa State University, U.S.

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BENG4-ECE, Yr 3

My Pre-departure Checklist

- Passport, visa
- US dollars or credit card, things for daily use
- Make sure you will get a place to live in when you arrive
- I especially want to mention that if you are already in USA in summer like myself, you need to exit USA and get a new visa for exchange purpose. It took me long to figure out the procedures, so I hope other students will not have similar confusion.

Just Arrived...

I missed the orientation after late arriving because of visa issues. I contacted a local Chinese student to pick me up at the airport, which may be the smallest airport I have ever seen. I was quite tired after the long journey and I really hate jet-lag! Only after check-in, I found that my roommates had switched to other bedrooms. We four students shared one apartment.

I tried to contact one of my roommates, Cooper, before the semester began. I met him later that day. He brought a bunch of guys to have a party in our apartment and got really drunk. I was a bit scared that time, but later on I got to know some of them. Then I found out two of my roommates are American and one is Chinese.

My Place

Iowa State University (ISU) is located in a small town called Ames in Iowa State, which is on the western side of Illinois State. Plenty of orderly maize fields can be observed on the way from Des Moines to Ames. The average age of the town population is 24, typical of a university town. It is a beautiful small place, I thought.

I needed to rely on Amazon a lot there because no big shopping malls can be found in Ames. Personally I was quite satisfied with the house we lived in. That seemed to be the most expensive apartment in Ames, which is quite close to main campus.

There are a lot of bus routes there, which are all free for students. By the way, the moonlight buses running at midnight were extremely useful when I needed to build my circuit in the lab till

very late. After all it looked dangerous to walk home late all alone.

My First Class

I got four days of 8am classes every week, which was a disaster for a guy loving to stay up late like me. Each session lasted only one hour in ISU except the lab sessions. My first class was about electronic circuits. The professor teaching the course was quite funny but sometimes I could not fully get his jokes because of my poor English.

One of my professors is American and two others are Korean. For the circuit design course, I needed to buy all the components required. As a result, I had to spend much time on searching for a single resistor with correct value among a bunch of components. In CityU, all the components and materials required in laboratories were provided to us and they were well-classified. Plenty of time could have been saved.

People I Met

I have three roommates there, Jiaxin, Cooper and Sid. Now I suddenly realized that it was a pity that we had not taken any photo together, otherwise I will definitely post their pictures here.

Jiaxin came from Tianxin, mainland China. It is kind of nice to have someone to talk with in Mandarin sometimes. He was a freshman, but looked quite mature already. He loved to bring a bunch of friends to our apartment to play LOL together. Unlike CityU, the hostel allows visitors to stay overnight from time to time.

Cooper is American, white and tall, blonde hair, a bit shy. He loves to bring many friends to have a party in our room, especially on Fridays. They always looked crazy after drinking.

Sid is also American, quite an outgoing guy. I had nice talks with him. He was quite interested in China and I felt good talking to him. I also met his family twice and got invited to visit their farm. They are a big family and they lived in a big farm nearby.

I met quite an excellent student called Fu Shen in one of my EE courses. He is Chinese, quite nice and he helped me a lot.

Summer and Joanne, students also from CityU, and some other students from Hong Kong traveled together with me to the east

coast of America and that was a wonderful journey.

It is hard to mention all the guys, but I sincerely thank all those who offered help to me when I felt helpless in a strange country.

Out of Classroom

I guess I have eaten too much junk food like pizza and hamburgers there. They are cheap and easily available, though not quite tasty enough for me.

I found a nice but inexpensive Chinese restaurant there. I became quite familiar with the restaurant owner by the time I had to leave. Their beef noodle soup and stir-fried beef offal are simply terrific for me! And I was so sad not being able to enjoy them anymore.

During the exchange, we also visited Chicago, Boston, New York and Washington, D.C.

Goodbye

Having to say farewell is never a pleasant thing. But we all need to move forward, we all have our own goals.

Home Sweet Home

After returning to Hong Kong, I sleep much later than in America, which is not a good habit. Now, I do not need to rely on having pizza all the time, which is actually a relief for a guy not good at cooking like me. Also, I need to get used to a life without Amazon here.

Sharing

First, it is better to learn something different from your major in exchange. Second, well plan your study before you apply to avoid lagging behind your normal study plan too much after returning to CityU. Lastly, do ask a lot. We will definitely come across many questions during the exchange, so don't be shy to ask.

Overall Rating

The exchange experience satisfied almost all of my expectations, but I wished there would have been a bigger surprise for me! So I choose to give a rating of 4 out of 5.

